

of the \$8 billion request level, contingent upon finding additional resources. There are many different ways in which you can do that. We are not prescribing how it can be done or should be done. That is not in the Appropriations Committee's role of authority.

In this context, it is utterly perplexing to me that the administration would threaten a veto when the process is just underway. I hope the President's advisers understand they cannot compel Congress to appropriate \$1 of money. That is exclusively, constitutionally the jurisdiction of the Congress. I hope they realize that rejection of good-faith efforts to reach compromise and maintain the essential operations of Government will harden positions and polarize and drive some in Congress to argue for no compromise at all.

The omnibus appropriations bill reported yesterday is not the only way to maintain Government operations beyond March 15. Other vehicles that may be drafted should this proposal fail or be vetoed may not be so responsive to the administration's programs. I do not wish to pursue that course. I believe the bill reported by our Appropriations Committee yesterday is the way we should proceed; to be accommodating, as we are the only authority that can appropriate money. It is the President's check and balance to either sign or veto a bill, including an appropriations bill, but we can take those rigid positions and polarized positions and continue the stalemate.

Mind you, the Appropriations Committee of the Senate has made a long movement, serious movement, sincere movement to try to be accommodating, recognizing the President has a role in the legislative process and has his priorities. But we also have ours. It is not going to be the President's way or no way any more than we are suggesting it should be the Congress' way or no way. We have made our move. We have made the gesture of trying to accommodate in a very real way. I only hope the President's advisers realize this may be our last and best offer. If they are more interested in the substance of governing than the politics of the moment, I hope they will work with us toward a successful conclusion of our efforts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

A VETO OF THE OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I wish to compliment my friend and colleague, Senator HATFIELD, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, for his statement. I hope the administration was listening. I just jotted down a few of the figures that Senator HATFIELD alluded to. He mentioned the committee had moved \$6.2 billion out of the \$8 billion the administration had requested. If I understand his statement correctly, they are still saying they

will veto the bill because we are not spending enough.

If they veto this bill or maybe if their threatened veto means this bill does not go forward, therefore the net result of what they are looking at, if I think ahead of this scenario, is then they are going to be looking at a continuing resolution, one that will continue funding at the lower of the House or Senate level, maybe even less a percentage of that. So the administration, while trying to get more money in spending for a variety of programs, may well end up getting less, because, as Senator HATFIELD just stated, they cannot make Congress appropriate money. It may well be that some of the President's pet programs, if they follow through on this veto threat of what sounds to me to be a very generous, maybe even overly generous bill reported out of the Senate Appropriations Committee—if they are going to threaten to veto that bill, maybe we should just look at the continuing resolution and/or maybe we should look at zero funding for programs such as national service.

Maybe we should look at zero funding for some other programs which the President feels very strongly about. He cannot make us appropriate the money. If he wants to shut down the entire Agency because he does not get the money for want of his new programs, that would be his decision, and it would also be his responsibility. And maybe he thinks he will gain politically by doing so. I doubt it. Maybe we will have to find out.

Again, I think Senator HATFIELD has something very good for the administration. It is very premature, in my opinion, as he stated on the floor of the Senate, for the administration to be issuing veto threats just when a bill is passed out of the Appropriations Committee. Usually that is not done until bills are passed and reported out of both Houses, and then possibly a conference report.

So I am disappointed to hear of the President's veto message, or veto threat, as explained by Senator HATFIELD.

SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I rise on the floor this evening because I want to compliment Senator BOND from Missouri, the chairman of the Small Business Committee, and also Senator BUMPERS from Arkansas for the legislation they reported out which is now pending, or we wish to have pending before the Senate.

Also, I wish to express my displeasure at those on the Democrat side—Senator DASCHLE, or whoever he is—for objecting to consider this bill. This is a bill that was reported out unanimously by the Small Business Committee. It has overwhelming support, as Senator BUMPERS mentioned and as Senator BOND alluded to as well. This is a bill

that is going to pass overwhelmingly in the Senate. To object to even considering it—and I looked at the unanimous-consent request. It even said let us consider it next week. To object to consider this bill today, or next week, I think flies in the face of common sense. It is well-known. Yes, part of the unanimous-consent request is that the bill would have an amendment offered by myself and Senator REID from Nevada, a bill almost identical to the one we passed through the Senate last year unanimously. It had a 100-to-nothing vote, a bill that would say Congress should review regulations. We would have an expedited procedure to do so. If Congress did not like it, we could kill it. If we passed a joint list of disapproval, the President would have an option to veto that resolution.

So we would restore checks and balances and restore congressional accountability—because many times Congress will pass laws and tell the agencies or the regulatory agency to implement it, and then we turn the agencies loose. And then we find out the regulations are far too expensive, maybe do not make sense, and have unintended consequences.

Congress should be in play. Congress should still have exercising oversight. This is going to make Congress responsible. It is going to make Congress look at the rules that come out of legislation as a result of executive action.

So, again, this is legislation that is supported by the President. So why in the world will our colleagues on the Democrat side of the aisle not let us bring up legislation such as this that is supported very strongly by the small business community all across the United States?

I used to be in small business prior to coming to the Senate. Small businesses are strangling with the mountains and mountains of paperwork. So we are trying to give small business at least some regulatory relief. We have a chance to do it.

My colleague from Missouri passed a good bill out of committee, and it was a bipartisan bill. We do not have many bipartisan bills. We need more. We need more bipartisan work. Senator BOND and Senator BUMPERS have done it in this bill. Senator REID and I did it in the congressional review. We need more examples of that.

So then when we try to take it up and pass it either this week or next week, by a time certain, unfortunately it is objected to. Those objections will not stand. Those objections will not last. They will not prevail.

I have heard other colleagues say that maybe we want to do a more comprehensive bill. I want to do a comprehensive bill. I want a significant comprehensive regulatory bill. It does not have to be on this. We can pass two bills this year.

It is part of the frustration of being in the Senate and Congress with people thinking, "Well, there is only one bill. Therefore, we had to put everything in